BUILDING STONES

IN one of the large manufacturing establishments of the United States, thousands upon thousands of grindstones of every size, from small ones up to great ones several feet in diameter, are used. As these stones wear out they are replaced by new ones, and since there is no further use for them in the shops they are carried out of the way. In many such establishments the custom is to let the worn-out grindstones lie in a heap or else to sell them to the highest bidder, but in this place another use is made of them.

The plot of ground on which the establishment is built is very large, and it is surrounded by a beautiful stone wall. Every stone is cut for its particular place in the wall, and the structure protects the plant and serves to beautify the establishment by its symmetry and grace. The remarkable thing about the wall is that every one of the many thousands of stones of which it is built is a grindstone that was worn out in the shops. It did its work as a grindstone and then, having given its best in that service, it was given a place of honor and usefulness in the permanent wall.

What a lesson that is to us who work here in God's great workshop of the world! This is a manufacturing establishment in the sense that God is accomplishing many great things in the world and that He is using his people as his instruments or tools with which to accomplish them.

He does not offer the Christian life as a life of ease by any means; it is a life of sacrifice and hard service, and it is common for those who are serving with a whole heart to wear out in that service.

But the difference—and it is a great difference—between the service of our Master who is in heaven and the service of selfishness and sin is, that although we shall wear out in time in either service, the one offers in the end nothing but to be cast out as worthless when our power to serve is gone; while the other offers a place of honor and usefulness in the home above through all the ages of eternity. Moreover, it is a happier life here that we live in that service, for it means accomplishing something that the world needs and that is pleasing to God, and it affords an outlook that is infinitely brighter than the other.

Round and round goes the stone in the shop as it grinds away at the tools, shaping them, fitting them, sharpening them. Life for the stone is a ceaseless round of duties and a ceaseless grind, but though it grows smaller and smaller and by and by becomes worn out, the tools that go out from the shop tell of the good service the stone has done and the perfect work it has accomplished.

Round and round goes life, morning and evening, week after week, winter and summer, year after year. It is a ceaseless round over and over again. At times it seems like a tedious grind, for there are many discouragements and difficulties to work against. But the last round comes, the last year, the last day, and life is done. Does the completed life satisfy the Master? Does the memory left behind speak for you of a good service done and a perfect work accomplished?

We cannot serve two masters. Let us be wise enough to serve Him who works side by side with his workmen in the shops, and who has said, "Henceforth I call you not servants; but I have called you friends."

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